The Christ As John Knew Him

M. T. Shelford

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The Christ As John Knew Him

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

By
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To
FANNY CAREY SHELFORD,
my faithful wife,
a loyal companion along the trail of
the friendly years,
this book is inscribed
with grateful acknowledgment of
her help and prayers.

FOREWORD

BEFORE me, as I read the book of John and begin to write these pages, are many wild flowers. I admire them collectively. Some of the varieties are more beautiful than others. Instinctively I desire to examine them more closely. But I do not care to analyze any of them. By so doing, I might know more about them, but I would not get their message as well as by admiring them in their natural surroundings.

The flowers are white and yellow, red and pink. They wave gaily on their graceful stems and are set in a background of gray and green and tan and gold. The breath of unspoiled nature comes to me out of the cool shades of the woodland by the side of the road. Why should I analyze the flowers? I could count their sepals and petals. I could pry into the mysteries of stamens and pistils. I could cut across the heart of the flower and count the growing seeds. I could classify the plant according to botanical standards. By destroying a flower, I might know certain facts by which I could trace my way through a botanical field book, and at the end of the process I would find out the name of a wild flower. I would have a scientific name. But that name might not mean so much to me as the name I learned in the care free days of my childhood.

The Gospel according to John is a book which we have known too long and love too well to attempt to subject it to a critical analysis. "The beauty of the Lord, our God," is upon it. In it He draws aside the mantle of His humanity and lets us see a gleam of His glory. He lets us hear His prayers in the upper room and in the garden. We see Him in the most intimate fellowship with His disciples. In His conversation with them, we feel that He is talking with us. John makes Jesus very real to a child of God.

It does not take very long to read the whole book of John. Some of its chapters we can repeat from memory. What is the message of the book? What answer does it find in your soul?

To get the most out of the book let us look at it first from one viewpoint and then from another. The flowers bow to the passing breeze and as they lift their faces to be kissed by the sunshine, we see new beauty in form, movement and color. The landscape has a peculiar charm when seen as a living picture. So we will take broad views of subjects suggested by John's Gospel and try to get his understanding of what he saw in the life and teachings of Jesus.

M. T. S.

Jersey City.

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I

THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

I. His Life

In order to appreciate more fully the Gospel according to John, it will be well for us to examine the Scriptures for the purpose of coming to know the author of the book. It is very desirable to know as much as possible about the life of a man to whom Christ revealed Himself more fully than to any other human being (Rev. 1:1-2).

1. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome. His home life and early training was of the good, wholesome sort common to self-respecting God-fearing people. From the allusions to Zebedee, we gather that he was a prosperous fisherman, who lived in his own house and carried on a business that was of sufficient importance to hire some men besides his sons, James and John (Mark 1:20).

2. John is supposed to have been a disciple of John the Baptist. He was one of the two to whom the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:40).

3. John was probably younger than James, an inference from the fact that James is always mentioned first. He must have been even younger than Jesus, for he lived until 98 A. D.

4. His mother, Salome, appears prominently in

the Gospel records, but his father drops out entirely after the calling of the disciples. It is commonly believed that he died soon after, for Salome is among that group of women who were devout followers of Jesus and ministered unto Him of their substance (Matt. 20:20-21; Luke 8:1-3; 23:55-56; Acts 1:14).

5. James and John were known as "Sons of Thunder." John was certainly of an affectionate disposition, but there was fire enough in his nature to win from the Lord Himself the unusual title. These two men once proposed to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans who were too plainly showing their unworthy prejudice against Christ for the narrow reason that He was on His way to Jerusalem (Luke 9:53, 54).

6. Some one has said of these sons of thunder that there was "plenty of hell in their gospel." It is true. John in his epistle differentiates between the saved and the lost very sharply. Jesus did not make any mistake when He chose a couple of sons of thunder. One such, if he is well balanced and filled with the love of God, will save more souls than a score of men who have no particular convictions.

7. John was the bosom friend of Jesus. He greatly rejoiced in the love of Jesus. It is from his own writing that we get the term, "The disciple whom Jesus loved." There is no reason to suppose that the other disciples ever spake thus of him. John did not until after the last supper (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20).

II. His Work

1. John was one of the three whom Jesus selected to witness some of the most important events in His ministry.

a. The raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37).

They came as near to the secret of His control over the powers of life and death as it is possible for human investigators to come.

b. The transfiguration. They were "eye witnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16-17).

They saw on the mount a glimpse of the personality which is characteristic of heaven.

They heard the voice from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:1-5).

They received and transmitted the oral testimony of the deity of Jesus from God the Father.

c. These three were chosen to accompany Him in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33).

They were chosen to enter into that preparatory state of Jesus when He was actually surrendering Himself to make the atonement for the sins of the world. If we could read between the lines what God intended that we should in the story of Gethsemane, we would then know something about vicarious atonement (Luke 22:21-44; John 18:11).

2. To John, Jesus committed the care of His mother.

With instinctive understanding, he seems to have taken the agonized woman away from the scene without delay (John 19:27).

But with the intense loyalty to Jesus, which always characterized his action, he must have hastened back to the cross, for he says that he saw the soldier pierce the side of Jesus soon after death had occurred (John 19:34-35).

3. He was the first man at the sepulchre on the glorious morning of the resurrection (John 20:4).

4. He appears in the early chapters of the Acts as the companion of Peter, who seems to be the leader. Then he drops out of the story.

The care of the mother of Jesus may easily account for the lack of prominence of a disciple so well qualified for leadership as John certainly was.

5. John lived later at Ephesus, from which place he was banished to Patmos, where he wrote the revelation. Subsequently he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel as his last work and died a natural death about 98 A. D.

6. His Gospel bears the marks of a closer intimacy with Jesus, and a more perfect understanding of His spiritual teaching.

7. Some have suggested the influence of Mary, the mother of Jesus, as one of the contributing factors to the very unusual viewpoint which seems to characterize the Gospel of John.

III. John's Viewpoint

It was different from the other disciples, being the utterance of a more intense disposition.

John was called "a Son of Thunder," but the intensity of his personal feeling has been subdued by a number of influences.

1. The wonderful fact that Jesus loved him.

" A Son of Thunder," naturally leaves so many heartaches behind him that he gets to feeling that he is not liked. It was John who said: " We love Him because He first loved us " (I John 4:10, 19).

2. The companionship of the mother of Jesus.

It should be remembered that she was told to be a mother to John. The mother-love that was poured out on John flowed into the expression of John's Gospel. Surely, he must have received some impression of Christ through the long intimate years when he cared for her as a son. It is significant that the apostle who knew Mary most intimately is the one who breathes his absolute assurance of the deity of Jesus into every paragraph of his book.

3. Fifty years of personal experimental religion.

He had enjoyed a lifetime of " fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ " (I John 1:3).

There is in his writings a wealth of personal feeling tempered by actual experience and observation.

He knew what still needed to be said in order to make Christ a living person in the experience of people who had not seen and known Him in His earthly life.

John writes from the viewpoint of an " elder " (I John 2:12-14).

The personal development of John's religious life qualified him in a peculiar way to present a

narrative of Jesus that would be superlative in its mystical and spiritual values.

IV. His Love

1. He kept very near to Jesus.

This was the secret of his success as a Christian.

" That disciple was known to the high priest, and *went in with Jesus* into the palace of the high priest " (John 18:15).

Loyalty was one of his characteristic qualities.

He was loyal to Peter, his friend, as well as to Christ.

" Then went he out and brought in Peter " (John 18:16).

2. Love is entrusted with the gravest responsibilities.

" When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved " (John 19:26-27).

3. Love has wonderful discernment. It knows its object instinctively.

He recognized Jesus more quickly than the other disciples did.

" Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord " (John 21:7).

4. Love follows very willingly.

Jesus said, " Follow me " John obeyed without hesitation.

Peter saw John following Jesus and asked a question that brought to him the admonition that he, too, should make it his first concern to be found following his Master (John 21:19-22).

5. John was very happy over the fact that Jesus revealed His love to him.

Every Christian should feel the same. To be conscious of the love of God as it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is an inestimable privilege for which we should devoutly thank our heavenly Father.

The simple little song, "I am so glad that our Father in heaven," is precious for the logical reason that it tells the true feeling of every heart that is actually in the experience of a first love.

II

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

I. The Living Word

1. God gave His good news through the Living Word.

"*Logos*"—"Words are the means by which we express what is in us and make ourselves known to others. So it is most probable that Jesus Christ is called the Word of God because it is through Him that God expresses Himself in creation, in providence, and in redemption. In fine, the word is the revelation of God" (George W. Clark, D.D. John 1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-3).

2. God recorded the Word through holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Personality is given of God and is always respected by God in His dealings with the person and His use of the person.

By reason of this fact, we see the peculiarities of a writer even though the message is inspired and accurately conveys the idea and delivers the message God wishes to have presented to mankind.

It makes the message practical because it has passed through the white heat of personal experience.

II. Twofold Purpose

There are two great themes closely interwoven that run through the entire Gospel, viz.: The Deity of Christ; The Plan of Salvation.

The author clearly states his purpose. "But these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31).

These great truths were so surely a part of his intellectual and spiritual life that we find them controlling his whole literary effort. They cause him instinctively to choose the incidents and words in the life of Jesus that furnish the best vehicle to convey these great ideas.

Not for one moment would we suggest that the writers of the synoptic Gospels were lacking in their understanding of these things; but writing at a later date, and with a much wider circle of readers in mind, John seems to have been chosen of God to say again, and say more clearly, that which will forever be a source of comfort to the distinctively Christian mind.

The earthly life of Jesus lends itself easily to a humanitarian interpretation.

God constantly guards His people against this by presenting the "Man of Sorrows" as "The Son of God."

It is believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God that brings eternal life to the soul of a man. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (I John 5:1).

Law and Grace met in Christ. John the Baptist's best sermon (John 3:25-36) is found only in the Gospel according to John. It is John the Baptist's valedictory. The most comprehensive thing he ever said is found in its closing verses.

The writer of the fourth Gospel seems anxious to have his readers think of Christ as God. His task was to tell what he knew of the earthly life of Christ in such a way that it would suggest His heavenly life. Time was used only as an introduction to eternity.

In his effort to present Jesus as "God manifest in the flesh:"

1. John opens his Gospel with a statement concerning facts as they were before the material universe was created.

2. John closes his Gospel without making any statement whatever concerning the manner in which Christ terminated His ministry on earth. To him the spirit of Christ was a living reality. He did not think of Jesus as one who is absent from the earth.

3. John introduces Jesus with God at the beginning (John 1:2).

4. John closes with Christ as the eternal leader of men, saying: "Follow me" (John 21:22).

His literary style is very unusual. Three things are noticeable: Minuteness of detail, clearness of description, and charming simplicity.

The simple phrase, "Let not your heart be troubled," is as full of meaning to one class of people as to another.

"John excels in the depth of divine mysteries."—Jerome.

"John wrote the Gospel of the world, resolving reason into intuition and faith into sight."—Wescott.

III. The Philosophy of Redemption

In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, we have the whole relationship between God and man set forth in the terms which a true Christian philosopher would naturally use.

1. God needed man. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1-2), "Logos,"—"a thought or concept." "The expression of that concept," God, is thus revealed as a being of thought and expression. He is not a mere "force."

Self-expression demands other beings to whom thought can be conveyed.

Scientists may show development in the geological records of the earth and Genesis 1:1-2 gives ample Biblical room for all the known facts. But there are two things which science admits:

(a) "That all life must come from pre-existing life;" and

(b) "That no missing link has ever been found by which the human race can be traced to the animal kingdom."

2. God created man.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was Life; and the Life was the Light of men" (John 1:3-4).

Man is not an animal. He is a special creation of God (Gen. 1:26).

Man was created in the image of God and for the purpose of fellowship with God. He became alienated from the life of God through the " fall," but God has never given up His purpose to bring His highest creation back into that intimate fellowship with Himself.

3. God sent a man—John the Baptist.

" There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the Light that all men through him might believe " (John 1:6-7).

The content of John's testimony concerning Christ is revealed in John 1:15-34.

All of God's great earthly purposes have been committed to men especially chosen and endowed for their work.

4. God became man.

" The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth " (John 1:14).

The whole mystery of the incarnation is hidden away in this philosophical statement. Matthew and Luke give the facts concerning His virgin birth. John goes far deeper into the mystery. His statement involves the reason for and the results of the incarnation.

5. God reveals himself to man.

" We beheld His glory," etc. (John 1:14))

" He hath declared Him " (John 1:15-18).

The law revealed man's need.

Grace reveals God's provision to meet that need (Scofield Bible note on John 1:16).

6. God takes away the sins of man.

John bore special testimony to this. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and said, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world " (John 1:29).

7. God calls man into His fellowship and redemptive service.

" The closing paragraphs of the first chapter of John's Gospel tells the story of the calling of Christ's first disciples (John 1:35-51).

The Lord's method of propagating the Gospel is that of calling men into His service and committing to them the responsibility of telling their friends about Him and bringing them to Jesus.

III

MORE ABOUT JESUS

It is conceded that John wrote his Gospel much later than the synoptic Gospels were written. This would presuppose that the author would have some different subject matter to make his new book worth while. It proves to be true.

The author really aims to tell his readers, "More about Jesus."

John chose different biographical material. Two-thirds of John's Gospel is new. Even then, he had not covered the subject. He says at the end of his story that "Many other signs and wonders did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book" (John 20:30).

Even the incidents and facts which he used in common with the other writers he has presented in a new way. He held every precious word and work of Jesus so that it would catch a certain ray of light. John wanted to tell what Jesus said and did in such a way that his readers would feel an impulse to love and serve and worship the Christ.

When I was preparing the notes for this lecture, I saw a very wonderful sight. A ray of light shone through a crack and passed through a cobweb in such a way that the light was refracted by the many strands of the web and there before my as-

tonished eyes was a miniature rainbow. The prismatic colors were glittering in delicate beauty where I had not known that even a cobweb existed. There is undiscovered beauty all around us. We need the light to reveal it. John told the story of Jesus with the idea in his mind that " the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not " (John 1:5).

He turned every story so that the careful reader may behold " His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father " (John 1:14).

Because John was presenting Jesus as the Son of God there were many things which had been told by others that did not need to be repeated.

Examples of Things Omitted

1. The earthy parentage of Jesus the Christ.
2. The flight into Egypt.
3. His baptism.
4. His temptation.
5. The sermon on the mount.
6. The transfiguration.
7. Description of the sufferings in Gethsemane.
8. The warning of Pilate by his wife.
9. The confession of the Roman centurion.
10. The rending of the rocks when Jesus died.
11. The cry from the cross, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? "
12. The account of the ascension.

Comparison with the Synoptic Gospels

The new material which John brings into his

Gospel is all chosen with the evident purpose of revealing the deity of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Nearly all of the new material is grouped into four great sections which constitute the body of the book. There are a few brief references to things mentioned in the synoptic Gospels scattered through the distinctively Johanine material. These serve to give some idea of the period in Christ's ministry in which the incidents that John relates took place.

The parts of the book which tell the story in common with the other Gospels, are shorter than the four sections of new material, and stand between the four Johanine sections in such a way that the analysis of the book naturally divides it into seven sections.

The mere grouping of the chapters that give new light on the life of Christ would not be of much value in itself. Therefore we will give a summary of the new facts to which John gives most prominence in his Gospel. To see just what it was that John told which had not been previously told will surely help to know " More about Jesus."

Section I. New Material
(John, chapters 1 to 5, inclusive)

The incarnation of the Christ who made the world, and who imparted life and light to men (John 1:1-5).

A man sent from God (John 1:6-34).

The first disciples (John 1:35-51).

The first miracle (John 2:1-11).

The first cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-25).

Conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21).

John the Baptist's valedictory (John 3:23-36).

Conversation with the woman at the well, and two days' ministry in Samaria (John 4:4-42).

Healing of the man at the pool called Bethesda (John 5).

In this section we find two brief passages that are mentioned in other Gospels. John 4:1-3 mentions that the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John. John 4:43-45 tells of the departure of Jesus from Samaria to Galilee. The incidents mentioned in these six verses constitute the exceptions to the fact that this section of the Gospel deals with entirely new biographical material.

Section II. Retold Material
(John 6:1-21)

This is a story of Christ ministering to the multitude by the Sea of Galilee and the feeding of the five thousand, which is told in all of the Gospels.

Section III. New Material
(John 6:22 to the end of chapter 11)

1. Discourse concerning the bread of Life, on the day following the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:22-58).

2. Result of this address (John 6:59-71).

3. Christ's teaching in the Temple at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1-53). Water of Life.

4. Woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11).

5. Discourse on the Light of the World and results (John 8:12-59).

6. Healing man born blind and teaching which grew out of the miracle (John 9).

7. The door and the Shepherd (John 10:1-18).

8. An open declaration of His deity (John 10:22-42).

9. Raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-46).

10. Plot against Christ's life and the advice of Caiaphas (John 11:47-57).

Section IV. Retold Material
(John 12:1-19)

1. The visit of Jesus to the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus in Bethany, when He was anointed by Mary (John 12:1-8). This story is also told in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Even in this section, which is mainly retold material, we find one thing that is peculiar to John, namely, that the raising of Lazarus from the dead caused the enemies of Jesus to consider the advisability of putting Lazarus to death as well as Jesus, because the miracle had led so many people to have faith in Christ (John 12:9-11).

2. The story of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is told in all of the Gospels (John 12:12-19).

Section V. New Material
(John 12:20 to the end of chapter 17)

1. Certain Greeks seek Jesus (John 12:20-22).

2. Christ's declaration that the end was near and oral testimony from heaven (John 12:23-50).

3. Washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:1-16).

4. The conversation of Christ with his disciples while eating (John 13:18-38). Parts of this conversation are also mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

5. Farewell discourse to His disciples (John 14, 15, and 16).

6. Intercessory prayer (John 17).

Section VI. Retold Material (John 18:1 to 20:21)

This is the story of the betrayal, trial, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Very naturally, this story is repeated in all of the Gospels, but it is very interesting to see that in this story which John tells in common with the other Gospel writers, he adds many significant facts. We will note a few of these sidelights which John gives on this most important period in the life of Christ.

1. Jesus before Annas, the ex-high priest (John 18:12-14).

2. John's acquaintance with the high priest and the fact that he brought Peter into the court of the high priest (John 18:15-18).

3. The refusal of the Jews to enter the judgment hall and the fact that Pilate went out to them (John 18:28-32).

4. Pilate's conversation with Jesus concerning truth (John 18:33-38).

5. Pilate's second appeal to the people (John 19:4-15).

6. The fact that Jesus himself bore the cross part of the way to Calvary (John 19:17).

7. Protest of Jews to Pilate concerning the inscription on the cross (John 19:20-22).

8. Description of Christ's garment (John 19:23).

9. Committing the care of His mother to John (John 19:25-27).

10. Breaking the legs of the thieves and piercing the side of Jesus (John 19:31-37).

11. His appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-17). (Only a very brief mention in one place in the other Gospels, viz., Mark 16:9.)

12. "He breathed on them," etc. (John 20:22-23).

Section VII. New Material
(John 20:24 to the end of the Gospel)

1. Second appearance in the upper room, Thomas being present (John 20:24-29).

2. John's purpose in writing his Gospel (John 20:31).

3. Christ's appearance to seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-14).

4. Peter's threefold confession (John 21:15-17).

5. Prediction of Peter's death (John 21:18-19).

6. Peter's question concerning John, which gives us the key to the authorship of the book (John 21:20-24).

7. John's wealth of unwritten material (John 21:25).

IV

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

EVERYTHING about Jesus was above the ordinary. From one viewpoint, He is seen as God. He claimed to be "The Son of God." From another viewpoint He was the most thoroughly human of all the sons of men. He even called Himself "The Son of Man." This title implies an embodiment of all that is human. Man in this sense has the meaning of all that is common to the race. This seeming contradiction accounts for the controversies concerning Him.

Jesus Himself was the greatest miracle of the ages. He came into the world miraculously. His earthly life was both natural and supernatural. His resurrection was a miracle that proved His power over death. His departure from earth was clearly a demonstration of His absolute independence of human limitations.

"His greatness was in Himself, not in what He did. Being what He was, what He did was inevitable."—P. W. Wilson.

A person who can believe in Christ as his or her Saviour should have no difficulty in believing in the miracles which He wrought.

I. Three Classes of Miracles

The miracles of Jesus can be divided into three classes:

1. The control of natural forces.

Examples of this class are: Turning water into wine, multiplying of loaves and fishes, cursing a barren fig tree, walking on the sea and stilling the tempest.

2. Healing diseases.

Examples are: Deafness, blindness, paralysis, fever, leprosy, insanity and numerous cases of ordinary ailments.

3. The raising of the dead.

Of these Luke recorded two and John one. They are as follows:

Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:55), and the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17); Lazarus (John 11:43).

II. Observations Concerning Miracles in General

1. We are beginning to understand that these works of God through His Son, Jesus Christ, were not contrary to nature, but were a further application of the laws through which He works.

2. Miracles are not a suspension of natural laws.

3. They cannot be explained by natural laws, but are in accordance with laws and principles not yet known to us.

4. Miracles are produced by a supernatural agent outside the realm of human experience or power; namely, by God Himself.

5. If there is a God, then surely miracles are

possible. If man's transgression could bring a curse, if man's will and effort can cause nature to exceed her ordinary manifestations as in modern agricultural and scientific achievements; God's will can surely do more; namely, produce miracles.

6. The miracles of Jesus often reveal the mind of God on mooted questions. We have an example of this in the discussion which Jesus brought about by healing a man on the sabbath day.

III. The Miracles Recorded in John

There are only eight miracles recorded in John, but he speaks as a witness, having knowledge of many miracles (John 20:30 and 21:25).

The following quotations would indicate that John had in mind all the miracles mentioned by the other Gospel writers.

a. The expression, "This beginning of miracles" (John 2:11), implies one of a series.

b. His miracles convinced some. "Many believed when they saw His miracles" (John 2:23).

c. Acknowledgment made by His enemies. "This man doeth many miracles" (John 11:47).

d. The number of miracles failed to convince. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him" (John 12:37).

John takes it for granted that his readers believe in the fact of miracles as wrought by Christ.

He selects his miracles for a purpose and interprets them more fully than the other Gospel writers.

In the miracles recorded by John, we find that they were the basis of the discourses which Jesus delivered.

The following is a complete list of the miracles described by John; six of the eight are not found elsewhere:

1. Water turned into wine (John 2:1-11).
2. Healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54).
3. Healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda; Christ's teaching which grew out of the miracle (John 5:1-47).
4. Feeding the five thousand (John 6:1-14). Told in all the Gospels.
5. Walking on the sea and stilling the storm (John 6:15-21). Told also in Matthew and Mark.
6. Healing of the blind man on the sabbath (John 9:1-41).
7. Raising of Lazarus (John 11:7-46).
8. The multitude of fishes (John 21:6).

IV. Lessons from the Miracles Recorded by John

There are two things noticeable in the interpretation of the miracles in John's Gospel.

a. In every instance we can see that John is thinking of Jesus as the Son of God. He explains the miracles and records what Christ said in connection with the miracles in such a way as to reveal new proofs of the deity of Christ.

b. Also in each of the eight miracles we find a

secondary lesson which is very helpful in its application to our personal experience.

The deity of Jesus will be considered in another place, therefore we will give our attention in this lecture to the secondary interpretation of the particular miracles found in John's Gospel.

We will take the miracles in the order in which they are found in the Gospel which we are studying.

1. Miracles and obedience (John 2:1-11).

The turning of the water into wine was the result of explicit obedience: "Whatsoever He says unto you, do it" (John 2:5).

2. Miracles and faith (John 4:46-54).

In the healing of the nobleman's son, we notice that:

a. The miracle was made possible by faith (John 4:50).

b. The miracle also produced faith (John 4:53).

The limit of blessing is with us, not with God. "According to your faith be it unto you."

3. Miracles as a proof of authority (John 5).

The healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda was made the basis of a long discourse in which Jesus declared His absolute authority.

He claimed equality with God and that He had a right to judge mankind. He also stated very clearly that eternal life is the direct result of our acceptance of Him as the Christ. The statement is so important that we should read it in His own words. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should

honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life'" (John 5:22-24).

4. Miracles as symbols (John 6:1-14).

The feeding of the five thousand made it possible for Jesus to explain that He was the bread of life. The natural bread was used as the symbol of the spiritual.

5. Miracles as a basis of confidence (John 6:15-21).

Christ walking on the water and stilling the storm is an example of divine care. "It is I, be not afraid."

6. Miracles as types of grace (John 9:1-41).

The healing of the man who was born blind raised the question, "Who did sin, this man or his parents?"

There was an old theory that special sin produced special suffering. Christ claimed that it was not always true. He said that the blind man afforded Him an opportunity: "That the works of God should be manifested."

In this miracle, instead of trying to find the connection between sin and suffering, we are to see an illustration of God's willingness to help the helpless.

7. Miracles and the resurrection (John 11:2-46).

The raising of Lazarus is a prophetic example

of the resurrection of the dead. It was on this occasion that He said: " I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die " (John 11:25).

Jesus said to Lazarus, " Come forth! " His voice will awaken the dead (John 5:28, 29; I Thess. 4:16).

8. Miracles and successful service (John 21:6).

The disciples were called to be fishers of men. The risen Christ was calling them back to the greater work. They had been unsuccessful. Christ directed them in casting the net, and they caught a multitude of fishes. In fishing for men our misdirected efforts bring meager results. When Christ directs the work, multitudes receive great blessing.

V

JESUS AS A TEACHER

JOHN'S treatment of the teaching of Jesus was controlled by the purpose which he had in writing. He sought to do two things, viz.: to reveal more perfectly the deity of Jesus and make clear the plan of salvation (John 20:31). Therefore we would not expect to find the social message of the Gospel or teaching concerning the millennial kingdom elaborated in this book.

We would naturally expect an author with such a purpose in mind to give a large place to the development of fundamental spiritual truth such as will develop saving and sanctifying faith.

There is a vital relation between what we believe and the character which we develop.

We will endeavor to get John's picture of Jesus as a teacher and then study a few of the things on which John lays emphasis in his record of the ministry of our Lord.

In his first account of Jesus as a teacher, John presents Him as one whose reputation is already established. Nicodemus greets Him as such: "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

I. Jesus Was the Greatest Teacher the World Has Ever Heard

The light of His wisdom is giving the world its wisdom. "I am the light of the world." He was not "ahead of His time" in the sense that exceptional men have been "ahead of their time." Jesus enunciated truths that have made possible the civilization of the Western world.

1. He claimed royalty on the basis of the truth He taught.

When Pilate asked Him, "Art Thou a king?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

2. Truth found expression in His personality. He said, "I am the Truth."

3. He showed the world that in the last analysis, truth is the expression of the will of God.

The world has not yet advanced to the sublime conception of the truth He uttered. Truth has been defined as correct opinion. We are continually revising our opinions when we find out more and more what Jesus meant. We can only set our watches correctly by a correct time piece.

4. His sympathy with and understanding of His hearers is perfect.

He was the Son of man. He was in touch with humanity everywhere and nothing human was foreign to Him.

The attitude of Christ towards imperfection is very significant. He patiently taught the ruler

who came to Him by night and the woman who came to the well to draw water.

5. In His public discourses He always sought to enlighten the minds of men and point out the truth rather than expose the error.

6. He spoke with authority.

The prophets said: "Thus saith the Lord;" the scribes said: "It is written in the law;" the apostles said: "In the name of the Lord;" Jesus said: "I say unto you."

He appealed to the scriptures, but not to the mere authority of words.

He revealed the hidden meaning in the heart and life of the Gospel.

He Himself lay back of the scriptures to which He appealed.

His message was so convincing that officers who had been sent to arrest Him returned without their prisoner and reported: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

7. There is a very unusual fact about the teaching of Jesus. It is possible to ascertain the correctness of the teachings of Jesus by personal experience (John 7:16-17 and 8:31-32).

8. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to send, bears a particular relation to the understanding of truth by disciples in our own day. We have a Teacher who continues the work. The promise was, "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

Spiritual truth is the most difficult of all truth for the natural man to understand. The deeper

things of the spirit can never be comprehended by an unconverted person (I Cor. 2:14).

The Holy Spirit enables people to comprehend spiritual things even though they may be ignorant concerning many other things.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and the need of a Saviour.

The Holy Spirit teaches us by bringing to our remembrance the things concerning Christ (John 15:26).

It is the office of the Holy Spirit to make true in us that which is already true for us in our glorified Lord.

II. Jesus Taught the Necessity of the Spiritual Birth and the New Nature

His conversation with Nicodemus is the most perfect statement concerning regeneration that can be found in the Scriptures (John 3:1-24).

The theme of life through believing in Christ begins at 1:12 and continues to 20:31.

The expression, "verily, verily" is repeated many times in the Gospel of John. It is used to give emphasis to the sayings which follow it. In every instance we find that "verily, verily" is used in relation to the new man in Christ Jesus. Note the following instances:

1. Birth of the new man (John 3:3).
2. The life of the new man (John 5:24–6:47 and 8:51).
3. The bread for the new man (John 6:32; 6:35 and 6:53).

4. The works of the new man (John 12:24 and 14:12).

5. The new man is not greater than his master (John 13:16).

6. The new man represents his master (John 13:20).

7. The sorrow of the new man turned into joy (John 16:20).

8. The new man has the privilege of prayer (John 16:23).

9. Youth and maturity of the new man (John 21:18).

III. Jesus Taught the Reality of Unseen Things

1. To the woman at Jacob's well, He explained that God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

2. To His disciples in the upper room, He made the Father's house seem as real as an earthly home (John 14:2-3).

3. His teaching concerning the vine and the branches makes clear the unity of the life between Himself and true believers (John 15:4-5).

4. The world finds it difficult to comprehend the possibility of prayer making any real difference concerning things in this world. Jesus taught that prayer changes things (John 15:7).

5. He also promised His disciples an unseen Comforter, a constant companion, whose presence would be very real to them. Experience has proved

that the Comforter came and abides with true believers.

IV. He Taught the Truth That God Is Love

1. His Love is world wide (John 3:16).

2. His love is personal (John 3:16–6:37; 10:27; 11:35-36 and 14:20).

3. Jesus revealed the love of God by His kindness to the unfortunate (John 5:6 and 9:6-7).

4. He showed mercy toward the sinful (John 8:1-11).

5. Love is the expression of true religion (John 13:34 and I John 4:6-12).

6. God's love caused Him to desire human companionship (John 14:1-3).

7. Love is willing to give life for its objects (John 15:13).

V. Christ Gave the World Its True Message Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead

A condensed statement of the doctrine of resurrection, as taught by Jesus, is found in John 5:25-29.

There is no extended teaching concerning the resurrection in the Old Testament. It is linked with the person and teaching of Jesus (John 8:51). It is a part of the covenant which He sealed with His own blood.

The resurrection of Jesus filled the disciples with hope. It was one of the important items in their preaching. " With great power gave the apostles

witness of the resurrection and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

Peter says that their optimistic spirit was due to the influence of the resurrection. "Hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3).

John quotes a number of Christ's specific statements concerning the resurrection.

1. The new life carries with it exemption from condemnation (John 5:24).

2. Jesus showed that the results of the resurrection depend on our relation to eternal life (John 5:25 and Rev. 20:4-6).

3. Resurrection, like creation, is to be at the command of the Son of God. Jesus has life in Himself (John 5:26).

"The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live" (John 5:28).

4. Jesus mentions two resurrections (John 5:29).

The Pharisees held this theory of two resurrections.

5. The deity of Jesus was proven by His resurrection.

He risked everything on His claim that He would rise again (John 2:19).

6. Our resurrection is as sure as His (John 11:25-26).

VI

THE DEITY OF JESUS

JOHN began his Gospel with the deity of Jesus. In the opening sentence he carries his readers farther into the past than Genesis 1:1. He introduces us to the Christ who was co-existent with God in the ages before the creation of the material universe.

John, writing as he did long after the other Gospels had been written, wrote as a Christian to Christians. The deity of Jesus is assumed throughout the Gospel. It is implied in every paragraph.

Near the end of the Gospel, John declares that his primary purpose was to so reveal the deity of Jesus that it would be possible for people to believe in Him as the Son of God (John 20:31).

In almost every incident John lets his readers catch a glimpse of " the glory as of the only begotten of the Father " (John 1:14).

In Christ's great intercessory prayer, one of the important requests was: " Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world " (John 17:24).

John's testimony concerning the deity of Jesus can be studied from several different viewpoints.

The personal testimony of Christ's disciples concerning His deity is found in many places in this Gospel. In conversation with several of His disciples, Jesus explained His relation to His Father. In His public addresses, Jesus often made statements that implied His deity. Once there was an oral testimony from heaven stating clearly that Jesus was the Son of God. Again, when the people appealed to Christ, asking Him to make a clear statement, He pointed out the fact that His ministry should lead to the logical conclusion that He was the Son of God. His methods, His miracles, His resurrection should lead a thoughtful person to recognize in Jesus Christ the attributes of deity.

The following outlines of study concerning the deity of Christ may prove helpful in revealing to the student how completely John set forth the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

I. Confessions Made by Those Who Knew Jesus Christ

1. John the Baptist (John 1:34 and 3:33-36).
2. Andrew (John 1:41).
3. Philip (John 1:45).
4. Nathanael (John 1:49).
5. Woman of Samaria (John 4:29).
6. Men of Samaria (John 4:42).
7. Simon Peter (John 6:68-69).
8. Blind man after receiving his sight (John 9:36-38).
9. Martha (John 11:27).

10. His disciples in the upper room (John 16:30).

11. Thomas (John 20:28).

12. John's own testimony. "It is the Lord" (John 21:7. See also I John 5:20).

II. Conversational Claims to Deity

1. With Nathanael (John 1:48-51).

2. With Nicodemus (John 3:16-17).

3. With woman at the well (John 4:25-26).

4. With man who had been healed of blindness (John 9:36-38).

5. With His disciples in the upper room. His deity is assumed throughout the conversation. A definite statement is found in John 14:9.

III. Direct Statements to Larger Audiences

1. At the first cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-17). In verse sixteen He laid claim to His Father's house.

2. To His critics after healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda.

This miracle and the teaching which grew out of it fills the whole of the fifth chapter and deserves some attention.

It was the Sabbath day. Jesus very deliberately told the man to "take up his bed and walk." The result was exactly what Jesus expected and wanted. The Jews began to persecute Him and sought to kill Him because of His disregard of their conception of how to keep the Sabbath as a holy day. Let us read carefully and enumerate the claims, all

implying deity, which Jesus presented in His answer to their charges.

a. That God was His Father (John 5:18).

b. That He was doing everything exactly as the Father directed, by His example and by His power (John 5:19).

c. That He enjoyed the love and confidence of His Father to an extent that allowed Him to see everything that His Father was doing (John 5:20).

d. That the Father had committed the whole matter of judging the thoughts and deeds of humanity entirely to Him (John 5:22-27).

e. That the Father demanded of men that they should acknowledge Jesus as equal with the Father, and honor Him accordingly (John 5:23).

f. That hearing His words and believing on God as His Father was the basis of eternal life (John 5:24).

g. That He Himself had the power to give life and that He would raise the dead (John 5:26-29).

No greater claims could be made. Jesus knew this and admitted that if there was no proof, He could be open to just criticism (John 5:31).

But He calls attention to three witnesses that confirm His position.

a. John the Baptist.

This human testimony Jesus did not consider necessary, but called their attention to it in order to win them if possible. He said: "I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved" (John 5:32-34).

b. His works.

He was constantly doing things that only God could do. His comment concerning this was: "I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5:36).

c. The Scriptures.

Christ's viewpoint concerning the Bible was that the Scriptures were God's great testimony to His deity. Devout Jews were in the habit of searching the Scriptures to discover how to live a perfect life in order that they might have eternal life, but Jesus advised that they continue to search the Scriptures for a better reason, namely: That they might come to know Him. He said: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Jesus called special attention to the writings of Moses, declaring that Moses had been very explicit in setting forth the person and work of the Christ. He said: "had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:46).

3. In the discourse on the Bread of Life, He claimed God as His Father (John 6:27 and 32-37).

4. In the discourse on the Water of Life, He claimed that He was sent from God (John 7:28-29).

5. In the discourse on the Light of the World, He claimed God as His Father (John 8:16, 28 and 36).

6. At the feast of the dedication He said: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

7. At the raising of Lazarus He revealed His

unity with the Father in the wording of His prayer (John 11:41-42).

8. In the Temple on Palm Sunday Jesus said: "He that seeth me seeth Him that sent me." In other words, God was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ (John 12:44-50).

IV. Oral Testimony from Heaven

During the last week of Christ's public ministry, an incident of unusual significance took place. Certain Greeks, who had come up to worship at the Feast of the Passover came to Philip and desired him to arrange an interview for them with Jesus. Before doing so, Philip consulted Andrew and together they came to their Master and told Him of this request. The fact that representatives of the Gentiles were deliberately seeking to know Him seemed to be a sign which Jesus had been expecting. Immediately, Jesus answered them, saying: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23).

His approaching death stood out vividly before Him. He explained the principals of the great Law of Sacrifice, and pointed out the fact that the road that leads to life passes through the valley of death. He said: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:24-25).

His disciples were called upon to follow in his

footsteps. Those who follow faithfully, not seeking to save their own lives, but turning away from the wickedness of the world and rendering sacrificial service, are sure to be received into the presence of Jesus. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be—" (John 12:26).

Contending emotions seem to struggle for utterance in the heart of Jesus at this time. He said: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27).

He could not ask to be saved from the Cross, because he had come into the world to render the perfect sacrifice, which was necessary for the salvation of mankind.

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:5-7).

His next utterance was a sincere prayer that the eternal purpose of God for the redemption of a lost world might be fulfilled through His sacrificial death.

"Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:28).

It was in answer to this prayer that the oral testimony of heaven bore witness to His claim of deity. "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying: I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" (John 12:28).

The people who were present at this time heard this testimony. Some seemed to have understood exactly what was said, while others in their astonishment failed to catch the words, and thought that there had been a peal of thunder. Jesus, Himself, claimed that it was a voice. It was an audible announcement from heaven itself. "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (John 12:30).

It was very evidently the purpose of God to have the fact that Jesus was His Son clearly in the mind of representative groups of both Jews and Gentiles before the crucifixion took place.

There can be no doubt about what was in the mind of Jesus at this moment, for He said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32-33).

V. Popular Proof for Practical People

One day when Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch of the Temple during the Feast of the Dedication, He was approached by a group of honest inquirers, who asked Him to make a definite statement concerning His deity. They said: "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10:24).

This request was the expression of a growing conviction among the people. They felt that He was the Christ.

Their leaders were trying to cause them to be-

lieve that He was not the Christ. It is no wonder that the people were confused.

Plain practical people are in the habit of believing what the professional people say, *e. g.*, in law, medicine, science, architecture, religion or any important subject; they follow the opinion of those who are supposed to be experts. Therefore, the people appealed to Jesus for a definite statement as to His deity. What was His answer?

Jesus wanted, and still wants, people to believe in His deity, but He wants us to believe because of His character rather than because it is a part of our creed. A creed has value only when it has conviction back of it.

The popular cry that day was: " Tell us plainly." The same demand is made today.

There are three answers that are of untold value to the popular mind.

1. The answer of His ministry.

The people had asked a reasonable question, and Jesus gave them a fair answer. He said: " I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do . . . they bear witness of me " (John 10:25).

It is true, as we have already seen in the earlier paragraphs of this lecture, that Jesus had made direct statements in which He laid claim to deity. Evidently the importance of what He had said and the real meaning of His words had not been understood by the people. Continuing with His answer to their question, Jesus said: " The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me " (John 10:25).

Again in verses 37 and 38 of the same chapter, as He brings His discussion of the witness of His works to a close, we find Him saying: " If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him." Compare this statement with the message Jesus sent to John the Baptist (Matt. 11:4-5).

When John the Baptist was in prison, he heard reports of the miracles and unusual things that were taking place. Being in prison, he was unable to identify the man whom he had pointed out as the Messiah with the one who was reported to be working miracles. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask: " Art thou He who should come, or do we look for another? " The answer which Jesus told the disciples of John the Baptist to give to their master was along the same line of argument which Jesus presented to these inquirers of the Temple. He told them: " Go and shew John again those things which ye hear and see."

Christ's method of revealing His deity is as sublime as the revelation of God in the natural universe.

Those who have anointed eyes see God in sunshine, in the flowers, in the mysteries of life and in God's care of His creatures, and in all natural phenomena.

The Psalmist speaks of these things as a universal language that is as intelligible to one race as another (Psa. 19:1-6).

In keeping with this law of the revelation of deity in the world, Jesus lived and worked as only God can live and work. He trusted to the intelligence of men and women to discern the fact that He was infinitely more than a man.

Christ's deity is seen in His attitude toward humanity. Nothing human could be like His attitude toward the sick, the sinful and His enemies. Only the infinite wisdom, sympathy and love of God could produce a character that would express itself as Jesus expressed Himself. Gradually the unprejudiced people came to see that Christ is the Son of God.

Peter had already stated the fact clearly (John 6:68-69).

2. The answer of His empty tomb.

Three separate groups of people demanded that Christ should come down from the Cross, thus demonstrating to them that He was the Son of God (Matt. 27:39-44). Of course, He did not do it. To have abandoned His redemptive work at this juncture would have proved that He was unable to complete His sacrifice, rather than demonstrate that He was divine. It was not necessary for Christ to demonstrate superhuman power by coming down from the Cross. He had given ample demonstrations of superhuman power by the miracles which he had wrought in the presence of innumerable witnesses. A greater demonstration of supernatural power was needed. In three days he gave it: He arose from the dead.

By this He proved that His power was not lim-

ited to material things or ordinary human experiences. Many people think that the miracles of Christ can be explained on a psychological basis. This is very doubtful, but as long as people make such claims, it is invaluable to find that Jesus proved His deity by something that cannot be explained by any law of human reason or experience. He actually demonstrated that His power extended beyond the limits of human life, and by reappearing, after absolute proof that He had been dead, He showed that His life was entirely independent of a physical body and natural causes. Study carefully John 2:19-22 and John 20.

3. The answer of experience.

It is possible for every honest believer to verify the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. He made a definite promise that entitles everyone of us to a personal assurance concerning the matters which pertain to the spirit, " If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself " (John 7:17).

The only absolute conviction that ever comes to the human heart concerning the deity of Christ, is given by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 16:17).

This personal realization that Jesus is the Son of God is the important thing in our personal belief, because it is related to our individual salvation.

" Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God " (I John 5:1).

" Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God " (I John 4:15).

Jesus Himself put this interpretation upon our personal conviction concerning the existence of God and the deity of His Son. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

VII

ECHOES FROM THE UPPER ROOM

JOHN gives a much larger place to the story of the supper than is given in the synoptic Gospels. Chapters 13 to 17 of John's Gospel are devoted to the story of what took place during the early part of the night in which Jesus was betrayed. The details of the supper and the warnings which he gave to His disciples in order to prepare them for the great shock that would so soon come to them are found in chapter 13.

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 are a record of the sublime things Jesus taught in His last hours of fellowship with His disciples.

Christians of all ages have found in these chapters the most convincing and helpful things that are to be found in the Word of God. It is an inexhaustible mine of sacred treasures. We cannot undertake to exhaust the riches of this great treasure house of divine wisdom. We will make only a brief outline of a single line of thought to be found in each of chapters 14, 15 and 16.

I. PROMISES OF THE LAST SUPPER

The disciples were in the mood to receive His farewell message.

He knew the sorrow they would feel.

He knew the sense of shame that would come upon them when they saw Him on the cross.

He had washed their feet.

He had warned them of their weakness.

The betrayer had left the room.

There must have been an oppressive silence. We can almost hear the heavy breathing of the apostles as they listened to His word. It is easy to picture the pale anxious faces of these men who loved their Lord and now heard Him predict His approaching death. A sense of impending calamity was in the air. Into this strained atmosphere Jesus brought a ray of hope. He said: "Let not your heart be troubled."

It will help us if we study the text and see what promises He gave to reassure us.

1. The promise of home.

"In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2).

He knew the power of home memories and home longing. There is no better anchor, humanly speaking, for a troubled soul, than the love of home. Jesus took this natural feeling and glorified it and promised a home in the other world. He has gone to prepare a place for us. We will not feel like strangers in a strange place when we get to heaven. It will seem like home. It is the Father's house.

2. The promise of His coming.

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3).

This was a definite promise that he would return for a definite purpose. He was not speaking of death. He was speaking of the fact that He will return and take us to be with Himself. The resurrection of the righteous dead is implied in this statement, as is also His personal reappearing.

3. The promise of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had no intention of abandoning His disciples and subsequent followers. While He Himself would not be present in bodily form, it was His definite purpose to remain in constant spiritual contact with all who believed in Him.

" If ye love me keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you " (John 14:13-17).

4. The promise of His presence.

Jesus knew that after His resurrection, His disciples would see Him ascend into heaven, but He wanted them to feel that the unseen presence of the Holy Spirit was really His own presence. The mystery of the unity of the triune God is involved in this promise, which He made after having promised the Holy Spirit.

" I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you " (John 14:18).

" He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love

him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:21).

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

In these promises concerning His presence, Jesus has included both the Father and the Holy Spirit with Himself.

5. The promise of spiritual understanding.

It is possible for a Christian to have a more intimate knowledge of spiritual things than it is possible for an unbeliever to have. Our spiritual intuitions are awakened and intensified by the new birth. In addition to this Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be our teacher, "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

6. The promise of peace.

We are in a world which is full of trouble. No one can hope to escape disquieting, heart-breaking experiences, but the true Christian will find that in spite of the most discouraging circumstances, he has a peace that passeth all understanding.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

II. Jesus as a Friend

There are a number of very important topics found in chapter 15. The unity of the believer

with Christ is wonderfully set forth in the first part of the chapter. Those who are born of the Spirit partake of the eternal life. The illustration which Jesus used concerning this is that of the vine and its branches. No closer relationship can be sustained than that the flow of the life-giving stream from the vine into the branches makes them absolutely one. Jesus declares His followers to be in this vital relationship to Him. The most intimate friendship is implied in such a relationship as this.

Some of the statements which Christ made concerning friendship are worthy of a moment's notice. Christ was about to leave His disciples. The hour of separation reveals the value of friendship. A man likes to leave his affairs in the hands of his friends.

1. The terms of divine friendship.

Christ's capacity for friendship is very unusual. His friendships are not exclusive. His circle of friends includes all who choose to be in fellowship with Him. He is still making friends.

His friendships are not over-drawn and sentimental. They are real and satisfying to the people who know the Master.

The wedding at Cana, and His relationship to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus at Bethany, reveal the naturalness of His friendship.

John the Baptist had disciples, but there is no mention of his having friends. Some great men have many admirers and followers, but no intimate friendships.

The intimate friendship of Jesus is open to all. One does not have to struggle into this friendship. The way is open—fulfil the conditions and it will grow like the lilies of the field. All Christ asks is that you do not let anything stand between you and your Lord.

Christ was talking about friendship when He said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

This was the price He paid for friendship with us.

He wanted friends. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

By His own death He removed the barrier between God and man.

2. Christ respects the personality of His friends.

His friends were not all of one type. We find every kind of temperament in the apostolic company.

He loved the rich young ruler who had a perfect social standing. A woman who had a sinful past was also among His devoted followers and friends.

One does not have to be like someone else in order to be a friend of Jesus.

3. The divine friendship is an ordination to special service.

"I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit" (John 15:16).

At this time the friendship of Jesus advanced to a higher plane.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the

servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

The true friend enjoys the confidence of his superior. This increased knowledge opens a way to coöperation. There is a wealth of happiness and comfort in such a friendship.

The divine friendship is a guarantee of special privilege in prayer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you" (John 15:16).

4. Jesus and His friends have a common heritage.

a. Separation (John 15:19).

b. Service, "The Servant" (John 15:20).

c. Persecution (John 15:20).

The friends of Jesus are exposed to the hatred of the world. Sometimes a man is known by the enemies he makes.

d. Misrepresentation (John 15:21-25).

e. Spiritual intuition (John 15:26).

The friendship of Jesus is perpetuated by the Holy Spirit.

f. Heavenly sonship (I John 3:2).

g. Ultimate glory (Jude 24).

h. Christ's friendship is permanent. Nothing can separate us from Him (Rom. 8:35-38).

5. The friendship of Christ molds our character.

Friendships often decide the details of conduct. Great friendships put life on a worth-while basis. They give a zest to life.

Christ has the faculty of making His friends come to really know Him. He takes us into His confidence.

The basis of friendship is *love.*

The result of friendship is *service.*

The privilege of friendship is *access* to the person.

Christ makes Himself an intimate friend. Our friendship for Christ is a good test of our spirituality.

III. The Words That Bring Peace

Chapter 16 begins with the statement: " These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should have peace."

The closing verse of the chapter says: " These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace."

Between these sentences we find repeated warnings of difficulties to be met and assurances of victory and peace of mind, if we meet our trials in the proper way. The promises gather around seven great words.

1. Preparedness.

Jesus warned His disciples and declared that His reason for doing so was " That when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them " (John 16:2-4).

2. Companionship.

Christ was going away: " Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come

to you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you" (John 16:7).

The Comforter is with us. We are not alone. Jesus has fulfilled His promise.

3. Guidance.

There were things about which the disciples had not been instructed and would be in doubt: "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

4. Compensation.

The result of His death would cause them to forget their sorrow, illustrated by the forgetful joy of a mother who finds compensation for all pain in the person of her child. There are compensations that make us forget the sorrows of life. "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20-22).

5. Confidence.

After His death and resurrection, His name stands as a guarantee of answered prayer. We do not need to worry because we know we can get what we need (John 16:23-24).

6. Love.

Love is the greatest need in life. If we love Christ and believe in His deity, the love of the Father is made real to us (John 16:26-30).

7. Victory.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:31-33).

The victory is already won. In Him we have peace.

VIII

THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD

In dealing with this subject, we must tread softly. We need to take off the shoes from our feet for we are standing on holy ground. But it is our privilege to know something about the prayer life of our Lord. Brief records of His prayers are given in all the Gospels. Our heavenly Father has taken us into His confidence and told us enough so that those who have eyes to see and ears to hear may get a very intimate glimpse into the Holy of Holies. Prayer reveals the emotions and purposes of the person who opens his heart to God.

The natural man can get no meaning out of the prayers of Jesus. But those who have spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:10-14) gain a new appreciation of the love of God as they study the prayers of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

It will help the student to study the reference to the prayers of Christ, as found in the synoptic Gospels. Notice particularly Matthew 11:25-27; 14:23; Luke 6:12; Mark 14:32-38; and Luke 22:39-46.

John gives us three of the prayers of Christ. Two of the three are very brief.

At the grave of Lazarus (John 11:41-42), we find a prayer of thanksgiving because of the fact

that a previous, unrecorded prayer had been heard. The wording of this prayer gives us the impression of habitual private prayer, supplemented by occasional public prayer. The prayer life of the believer may well be patterned after this custom of our Lord. We need much secret prayer, a real fellowship with God. Public prayer is for the sake of those who hear. " Because of the people which stand by I said it."

At the close of His public ministry, we find another prayer of only two sentences (John 12:27-28). The crisis had come. His soul was troubled. To the Greeks and " the people that stood by " He presented the two possibilities of prayer that were open to Him. Either petition would have been granted. " Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? I *could* say, ' Father, save me from this hour.' I *do* say: ' Father, glorify Thy name.' "

This prayer brought an audible answer from heaven. Some of the people thought that the strange voice was thunder, others thought that an angel spake to Him. But we know that the Father answered. The prayer was directed to the Father and the answer was in the first person, " I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

The great prayer of intercession (John 17) stands all alone. There is nothing else in all the Scriptures that approaches it. There in the upper room after He had spoken so freely to His disciples He let them listen as He talked to His Father. He lifted up His eyes to heaven and spoke

as freely as He had spoken to the men with whom He had eaten the supper. The Son of man being the Son of God could speak with equal freedom to man and God.

It will be impossible to give an exhaustive treatment of this greatest of all prayers. No human being can sound its depths, but all believers can draw near to God and know Him better by a careful study of this one prayer in which the Lord takes us with Him into the Holy of Holies and lets us hear His perfect ministry of intercession. We venture to give a few practical observations, hoping to lead the student to a careful study of the prayer itself. Spiritual discernment opens to all believers "the deep things of God." In the study of this prayer the promise found in I John 2:27 should be made real to us individually.

I. Ten Great Petitions

1. That He might be glorified in His relation to the earth (John 17:1).

This particular exaltation was to be because of the redemptive work which was about to be completed. This is shown by the connection of verses one and two and also in Philippians 2:9-11.

2. For a restoration of the glory which Jesus had before the world was made (John 17:5 and Phil. 2:6).

3. Prayer for the security of believers (John 17:9 and 12).

4. That believers may have fulness of joy (John 17:13).

If this petition was granted, and there can be no doubt about the Father answering the prayer of His Son, then Christians may be and should be joyful people.

5. Prayer for the sanctification of believers (John 17:15-19).

Three aspects of sanctification are suggested:

a. Separation from the world (John 17:15-16).

b. Personal transformation through the operation of the truth as revealed in the Word of God (John 17:17-19).

c. Christlike soul-winning dedication to the work of the Lord (John 17:18).

6. For the spiritual unity of believers in all times and places (John 17:23).

7. That the world may have a convincing manifestation of grace and be led to believe that Jesus was sent of God (John 17:21-23).

Every disagreement among Christians, and every worldly ambition which belittles Christians in the eyes of the world keeps the world from seeing Christ. Christian perfection is the means by which the world may know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

8. That believers may be with Him. He longs for our presence as we long for His presence. True love has its counterpart (John 17:24).

9. That believers may behold His glory (John 17:24).

There was a vision of this on the Mount of Transfiguration and some gleams of glory shine out from the book of Revelation.

10. That the same love which the Father bestowed upon the Son, may be in believers (John 17:24 and 26).

If love fills our hearts, then Christ is in us, the "Hope of glory."

II. The Gift of Eternal Life

Eternal life is the ideal of humanity. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23).

The natural human hope for continued useful happy existence was made impossible by sin. Jesus removed this obstacle by His sacrificial life and death.

At the very beginning of this great prayer of intercession, He revealed the relation of His approaching death to the great need of humanity.

To His heavenly Father He said: "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:2-3).

Every fact in the life of Christ indicated that He was able to give eternal life.

1. His miraculous birth.

2. His perfect mastery over the forces of life as seen in the oft-used power to heal disease.

3. His perfect control over the material things that sustain life.

Example: Multiplying loaves and fishes.

4. His ability to control the natural forces that sometimes destroy life.

Example: Stilling the storm at sea.

5. His restoration of life to those that were dead.

6. The fact that His own death caused such a disturbance in the forces of nature that it was evident that some controlling factor in the universe had been interfered with.

7. His resurrection proved the everlasting and absolutely superior quality of His life.

8. The peculiar qualities of His life after the resurrection showed that He was in constant communication with the unseen world.

9. His ascension proved his true place in the universe.

III. The Gift of the Word

"I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

Our relation to the Bible has a great deal to do with our relation to the world.

1. We never get much of a hold on the Bible until it is God-given (I Cor. 2:14-16).

2. Genuine interest in God's Word tends to weaken our interest in the world:

a. By putting us into opposition with many things that the world enjoys.

b. By giving us new ideals.

c. By teaching us that there is a better world.

3. Consciously or unconsciously, the world be-

gins to count us out in many of its arrangements, after we thus receive the word of God.

4. When the world gets through with us, Christ makes us His friends (John 15:14-15).

Then we learn faster concerning the precious things of the Word.

5. The Word is a gift that enriches us.

A gift of a million dollars would change our lives entirely by opening to us new possibilities of enjoyment. The riches of His Word also changes our lives in the same way.

6. His Word is the instrument of our sanctification (John 17:17).

7. The gift that enriches also imposes responsibility.

IV. The Glory of a Finished Task

"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

Jesus was the only one who could say this in the absolute sense. All through this prayer we find things which Jesus had finished.

1. He had established the fact of His deity in the minds of those whom the Father had given to Him.

"I have given them thy Word—and they have received them—and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17:6-8).

His deity was the foundation of the work that was still to be done on Calvary.

2. "I have glorified thee on the earth" (John 17:4).

3. "I have manifested thy name" (John 17:6 and 26).

4. "I have given unto them thy Words" (John 17:14).

5. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept" (John 17:12).

6. "I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

7. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17:22).

We have smaller tasks, but we, too, may glorify God by doing the work which He has sent us to do.

In order to glorify God, we must first find our task.

Having found our task, we are under obligation to God to use every proper means to succeed. It is the achievement, not the number of years of service, that counts most. The life of Christ was short. His achievement was beyond comparison with the success of any other man.

IX

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

THE STORY of the trial and crucifixion as told in chapters eighteen and nineteen of John's Gospel is naturally very much like the same account in the synoptic Gospels. Read the chapters very carefully before preparing this lesson.

John does not dwell upon the agony of the cross. He does add a great many details to the story as already written in the other Gospels (see Lecture 3, Section 6). Inasmuch as the theme of this lecture is the very heart of the Gospel, and as John has blended his version with the other writers, we will not confine ourselves wholly to John's Gospel, but we will think together of some of the general deductions from the story of the crucifixion.

The sacrificial death of Jesus is introduced into the first chapter of John's Gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

The shadow of the cross falls upon the Gospel of John in the third chapter. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

John makes the record of the fact that Jesus

foretold the new understanding of His deity that would follow His crucifixion. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28).

We are indebted to John for that double prophecy of Jesus, in which He foretold the fact that the cross would be the center of the spiritual universe and at the same time indicated the manner of His death. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

I. The Cross Was a Necessity from the Human Standpoint

If man was ever to rise from the depths of depravity into which Adam plunged the race, it was necessary for Christ to die.

1. Sin had created a condition from which we can escape only by the help of a sacrificial death. "Must . . . be lifted up" (John 3:14).

The natural man is "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21).

2. John mentions two incidents in connection with the trial of Christ, which illustrate this complete "alienation" from, and inability to understand God.

a. The choice of Barabbas as a popular hero. "Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas" (John 18:39-40).

It may be justly claimed that their natures were so corrupted by sin that they had more natural affinity for a bad man than they had for a good man. Our choice of heroes is one of the most searching tests of character.

b. The total inability to apply a divine law in a just manner.

" We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God " (John 19:4-7).

They had a perfectly good law against blasphemy, but they did not have the ability to choose between a good man and an impostor.

The crowd who had felt His healing touch and listened to His matchless words were in some way persuaded to cry out " Crucify Him " (John 19:6). Less than a week before they had ushered Him into the city as their King (Luke 19:38).

II. The Cross Was a Necessity from the Divine Standpoint

1. God loved the world. He could not abandon man to eternal doom and be true to His nature. " Love never faileth." This was the greatest test to which love has ever been subjected, and love did not fail (John 3:16; Eph. 5:25-27; I John 4:19).

2. John the Baptist presented Jesus as " the Lamb of God " (John 1:29, 36).

John the Evangelist completes the picture. In chapters 18 and 19 he tells how the " Lamb without blemish " was slain on the world's day of atonement.

a. The judge, executioner and the people all felt that an innocent man went to the cross.

b. The centurion who conducted the execution was convinced in the hour of Christ's death. "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47).

c. The people smote their breasts as they returned from Calvary. The weight of the responsibility they had taken upon themselves was already beginning to rest heavily upon them (Luke 23:48).

III. The Cross Made Personal Salvation Easy to Obtain

1. The uplifted Christ makes saving faith so easy that no special training or religious education is required for salvation. Anyone can meet the requirements of God's plan for our salvation (John 3:14-15).

2. The cross reveals the true estimate of sin. God looks upon it as an awful thing, that cannot be condoned. If He paid such a price to purify sinners, then we cannot treat it lightly (Heb. 2:3).

3. The cross revealed the greatness of the love of God. The banner of universal sympathy was unfurled. God loves us all, all the time.

The hands are usually folded over the lifeless heart at the hour of death, but the heart of Jesus was open to the eyes of the world. From its sacred depths there flowed cleansing blood and healing water. "The outstretched arms of Jesus embraced the whole world."

4. The story of the cross claims the attention

of the world. Instinctively we are drawn to the one who took our place and bore our punishment (John 12:32).

a. He was friendless that we may have sympathy.

b. He suffered injustice that we may have mercy.

c. He suffered abuse that we may have brotherly kindness.

d. He suffered stripes that we may be healed.

e. He was tempted that we may have victory in temptation.

f. He died that we may have everlasting life.

Simple gratitude for such a work of love should prompt every fair-minded person to love Him instinctively. "We love Him because He first loved us" (I John 4:19).

5. The cross has placed Christ in such a relation to a sinful world that every individual soul must decide either for or against Him.

a. By nature and by actual personal transgression, every man is guilty of sin in the sight of a holy God (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23).

b. Redemption was completed on Calvary (Rom. 3:25; I Peter 1:18-19). The price was paid (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24). "God commendeth His love to us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

c. To neglect or wilfully reject Christ as a personal Saviour makes the person who does so "a partaker of the crime" of crucifying the Son of God (Heb. 10:29).

The only way for a sinner to "wash his hands"

of the rejection of Christ is to openly confess Him as our Saviour and actually submit to Him as Master of our lives (Rom. 10:10; I John 4:2-3; 4:15 and 5:1).

d. God assures us of His love and offers pardon on the simple terms of its open acceptance.

e. Christ promises to confess before His Father and the holy angels all who confess Him before men (Matt. 10:32).

f. The claims of the cross are made personal by the call of the Spirit (John 16:8-11; Titus 2:11; Rev. 22:17).

IV. The Cross Gives Us a World-Wide Message

1. The cross proved that the love of God is world-wide (John 3:16).

"There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Rom. 10:12).

Differences which show in our favor are due to the influence of the Gospel of grace and not to the inherent possibilities of race.

2. Personal salvation is possible to all in a Christian community, but not possible to all in a heathen land. The logic of Christian responsibility is summarized in Romans 10:14-15.

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?"

"How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

"How shall they hear without a preacher?"

"How shall they preach except they be sent?"

It is a high honor to be chosen to go.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things."

The Holy Spirit directed the church to send the first missionaries (Acts 13:2).

3. To argue that people can be saved without the Gospel is an argument in favor of three absolutely false propositions:

a. That ignorance is a substitute for faith.

b. That ignorance will answer as well as purity. The heathen are not innocent people. Heathenism is morally vile. They are sinners. Moreover, they are self-condemned. They are always trying to appease the angry spirits.

c. That the death of Christ was not necessary. If anyone can be saved without Christ, all could have been saved without Christ, and the death of Christ would then be unnecessary.

4. The Christian is commanded to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

V. The Cross is a Symbol of Triumph

His enemies thought it was the instrument through which they could destroy Christ and cause Him to be forgotten. They thought His death would end His career, but they were mistaken. The cross carried the mighty Conqueror into the dark recesses of the unseen world, where He destroyed death and "brought life and immortality to light."

He vanquished His foe in the temptation in the wilderness.

He experienced every human emotion and was untouched by sin. He was " In all points tempted as we are, and yet without sin " (Heb. 4:15).

The cross carried the fight to the very gates of hell and He came back the absolute master of the powers of death (Heb. 2:14-15; Acts 2:24; Rom. 6:9; I Cor. 15:26; II Tim. 1:10).

In the end He will cast death and hell into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

NOTES

Fate of the Murderers

Judas—a suicide.

Pilate—recalled, degraded, banished to Gaul, a suicide.

Herod—died in exile.

Caiaphas—deposed the next year.

Annas—the house of Annas was destroyed a generation later by an infuriated mob.

Six Trials and Examinations

Before Annas,
Caiaphas,
Sanhedrin in formal session,
Pilate,
Herod,
Pilate, formally declared faultless (John 19:6).

X

THE CHRIST OF THE FORTY DAYS

I. Jesus Appeared to His Disciples Ten Times Between His Resurrection and Ascension

1. To Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-17).

Mary Magdalene was accompanied by Mary, mother of James, and Salome (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10) when she visited the garden. In some way she must have been separated from these companions at the moment that Jesus met her.

2. To the other women, probably only a few moments after He had appeared to Mary (Matt. 28:9).

They were on their way to tell the disciples that Jesus was risen, as the angels had instructed them to do.

3. To two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32).

4. To Peter (Luke 24:33-34; I Cor. 15:5).

5. To ten apostles (John 20:19-23; Luke 24:36-48).

6. To eleven apostles (John 20:26-29).

7. To seven apostles (John 21:1-22).

Peter was fully reinstated into his apostleship at this meeting, which took place on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

8. To five hundred disciples (I Cor. 15:6).

This was probably the occasion of the giving of the great commission (Matt. 28:16-20).

9. To James (I Cor. 15:7).

It is commonly believed that this James here mentioned was the brother of the Lord (Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19).

10. At the ascension (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12).

Only four of the ten appearances are recorded in John, but it is noticeable that John gives a more extended account of the four appearances which he does mention. Chapters 20 and 21 in his Gospel describe at length what took place on these occasions.

John also calls attention to the fact that the record of the appearances of the Christ of the forty days is incomplete. Only a portion of the things that Jesus did and the instruction that He gave His disciples are recorded in any of the Gospels (John 20:30-31 and 21:25).

II. Nature of the Evidence That Convinced the Disciples of the Resurrection of Jesus

There is a peculiar emphasis in the story of the appearances of Jesus which John describes in his Gospel.

It was a spiritual quality that fully established their faith. The empty tomb and all the details of investigation are described accurately by John, as an eye witness (John 20:1-8). But there was still something lacking. The facts, even though they were "believed" (John 20:8), were unrelated to

a living spiritual faith (John 20:9). Faith rests on the Scripture and is supported by the experiences of the heart.

1. It was the sound of the Master's voice as He pronounced her name that brought recognition to the weeping woman (John 20:16).

It was the thrill of love that brought recognition to Mary.

2. Jesus appeared unexpectedly in the closed room. His greeting was, " Peace be unto you."

It was the gentle blessing of " Peace " that gladdened the hearts of the ten.

Something responded in the hearts of the disciples as they heard His voice and saw His hands. " They were glad " (John 20:19-20).

3. Eight days later He appeared again in the same place, in about the same way, and Thomas was completely convinced. Without hesitation he worshipped, saying, " My Lord and my God " (John 20:28).

It was the outstretched hands and the kind voice of Jesus that completely melted the stubborn heart of Thomas.

4. The sincere disciple of Jesus is sure to receive infallible proof of the fact that Jesus lives (John 20:31; Acts 1:3). The Holy Spirit will bear witness to the Scriptures, giving the believer a twofold assurance (John 7:17).

III. The First Meeting in the Upper Room After the Resurrection

There is a great significance to every Christian

and every church in the first meeting in the upper room after the resurrection.

1. Peace is the natural spiritual privilege of the child of God (John 20:21).

It rests on the teaching of Christ (John 16:33).

It is communicated to the believer by the living Lord, who comes quietly to our side in the hours when we need Him most.

2. The breath of His resurrection was imparted by the Holy Spirit, as the breath of God made man a living soul at the beginning (John 20:22; Gen. 2:7).

3. Authority concerning the remission of sins was committed to the apostles and continues with the church (John 20:23; Matt. 16:19; 18:18).

The apostles were to be guided by the Holy Spirit in declaring the principles on which men's sins can be forgiven (John 16:13). Notice the work of the Holy Spirit as it is implied in the following instances (Acts 3:19; 11:17-18; 16:31; 20:21 and 26:20).

They were also able to announce the Spirit's decision in regard to individual cases (Acts 1:24-26; 5:3-9; 8:21-23).

IV. In the Story of the Meeting on the Seashore the Interest Centers in Peter

1. Peter had denied the Lord and was broken-hearted (Matt. 26:75).

2. The Lord had already appeared to Peter, but no details are given (Luke 24:34).

3. In this chapter we see the method of the Master with men of impulsive temperament.

a. Jesus gave Peter plenty of time before demanding a new public confession.

b. He met him in a select company and on social, friendly terms (John 21:3-14).

c. Jesus appealed to Peter's love (John 21:15-17).

A denunciation of Peter's wicked denial would have had a different effect upon him.

The threefold question was a rebuke that softened the heart but did not arouse anger.

d. Jesus gave Peter a real task to do. He said to Peter: " Feed my sheep " (John 21:16).

e. He warned Peter that he would still have an opportunity to prove his loyalty (John 21:18).

The characteristic of an elder is to stretch forth his hand and be led. Peter became a true elder that morning.

V. The Living Christ Brings Comfort to Every Tomb

Death is robbed of its sting by the presence of the Christ who saves from sin (John 20:16; I Cor. 15:55-57).

There were angels in the empty tomb and Jesus was very near (John 20:12).

Every grave should be made in a garden of hope (Titus 2:13).

Plant the sweetest scented flowers of memory around the graves of those who have gone before us.

VI. The Resurrection of Jesus is the Pledge and Prophecy of the Resurrection of All Who Believe in Him

Jesus Himself made a comprehensive statement concerning the resurrection. John 5:21-29 unfolds some of the deepest mysteries concerning it.

The relation of our faith to the resurrection of Christ is more fully stated by Paul in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. We quote a portion of his argument which not only shows that our salvation is predicated on the fact of a risen Saviour, but also that the Christian hope of the resurrection is consistent only when we believe that Christ actually arose from the dead.

"For if the dead rise not then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:16-22).

VII. Characteristics of Christ After the Resurrection

1. He was a real bodily person.

2. He possessed a spiritual quality that made His presence possible in any place at any time.

3. He could be recognized only by those who had the discernment of spiritual intuition.

4. He is coming back again in the same body in which He went away (Acts 1:11; John 14:3).

The last words of Jesus, quoted by John, are: "If he tarry *till I come,* what is that to thee?" (John 21:23).

XI

A TWOFOLD PICTURE OF CHRIST

We have in a previous lecture seen John's peculiar qualifications for understanding the Lord Jesus. If we could see Jesus as John knew Him we would have a new picture of "The One Who is Altogether Lovely."

John was a careful observer. There are little details added to his descriptions that make his pictures of Christ very lifelike. This unusual power of observation helped John to get a deep insight into the character and work of his Master. Note the significance of the following phrases taken from John's descriptions.

1. "As He walked" (John 1:36).

John remembers that when the Baptist pointed out the Messiah He was walking, not standing or sitting.

2. "He spat on the ground" (John 9:6).

John's particular notice of this part in the anointing of the eyes of the blind man tends to strengthen our faith in him as a creditable witness.

3. "Laid aside His garments" (John 13:4-5).

John is explicit in his statement as to how the Master prepared Himself for the task, when He was about to wash the feet of His disciples.

4. " Lifted up his eyes to heaven " (John 17:1).

Christ's attitude in this particular prayer is here specifically mentioned.

5. " Ofttimes resorted thither " (John 18:2).

John tells less about the garden than the other writers, but mentioned this, that the garden was a customary place of prayer. The other three writers fail to speak of the fact that they met there on other occasions.

6. " Bearing His Cross " (John 19:17).

Luke possibly implies that Jesus bore His cross, but does not state it, neither does Matthew nor Mark. John's recollection of the way to the cross was of the Master with the cross actually upon His shoulders.

7. " Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout " (John 19:23).

The peculiar manner in which Christ's garment had been woven is a good example of the minuteness of detail which characterized John's Gospel.

8. " I thirst " (John 19:28).

This one personal request from the Lord on the cross lingered in the mind of the Apostle John, and he added it to the painful story of the death of Christ.

9. " And there came also Nicodemus " (John 19:39).

It was John who told the story of Nicodemus in the early ministry of Jesus. How fortunate it is that he remembered to tell us that Nicodemus came to the cross.

10. " Jesus stood on the shore " (John 21:4).

John recognized the Master before his companions did.

It is not surprising that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" had observed the personal peculiarities and habits of the man Christ Jesus, who was so near to his heart. But it is surprising that John should have remembered these details and incorporated them in his Gospel so long after they happened. If the other writers who wrote sooner had remembered more details of this character it would not have been so surprising. There is only one conclusion. John occupied a place that was infinitely nearer to the heart of Christ, while He was in the flesh. And also, his love for Christ had deepened with the passing years, fixing indelibly the impressions he had received as a young man.

John carried in his heart a picture of the Christ that was as clear after half a century as it had been when Jesus was with His disciples in Galilee.

The highest perfection of character is revealed in its relation to religious convictions and emotions. Human weakness betrays itself in these matters, even when outward conduct is correct. Jesus was the ideal Saint. His humanity was perfectly balanced. His expression of religious feeling was faultless.

By the time John was ready to write his Gospel he had a mature understanding of human nature and social relationship. He was able to appreciate the splendid attitude of Christ toward God and man. John carried in his heart a twofold picture

of Christ, so we will examine a few details of each picture:

I. The Perfect Man

The fulness of grace and truth which John had observed was the foundation of his regard of Christ as the absolute ideal of perfect humanity.

1. Flesh full of grace and truth is the highest attainment of Christian perfection in this world.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

"We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

2. Jesus was willing to let religion express itself in the usual way.

Judaism was imperfect, but He did not renounce it. The temple was His Father's house. He did not seek to change its forms or ceremonies, only to cleanse it of abuses.

3. He was congenial and friendly.

He went to weddings and He ate at Pharisees' houses with equal complaisance. He did not shrink from sinners. Their future seemed to interest Him more than their past. A wicked woman washed His feet with tears, and one of the best of women anointed His feet with precious ointment. He was criticized in both instances, but commended both women.

4. He was not self-conscious.

People who are making a great effort to be good are apt to fall into one or the other of two extremes.

a. Introspection, which leads to a morbid self-depreciation.

b. Superiority, which looks down upon others who do not conform to their particular standards.

There was no trace of either of those things in Christ. He did not appear to think much about Himself.

5. Pilate pronounced Him faultless.

a. There was no fault in His conduct.

b. There was no fault in His character.

A group of officers who had been sent to arrest Him returned without the prisoner and said: "Never man spake like this man."

c. There was no fault in His teaching.

He had fire enough to feel, a fine sense of justice, and perfect self-control.

6. Jesus was always in the will of God and conscious of God's approval.

"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John 7:18).

This is a fine ideal for all who seek to be holy.

7. John looked upon Jesus as the Perfect Example.

He remembered that Jesus had said: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

The example was complete in its spirit as well as its actual deeds.

This was no doubt intended to apply to other things, besides the washing of the disciples' feet.

It was an example of the spirit of service which characterizes the life of Jesus. He transmits to our lives not only ideals to inspire us, but grace to help us.

II. The Son of God

The Christ who was most often in John's mind was far more than natural perfection and infinitely greater than the highest ideal of sainthood.

"All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (John 5:22).

1. No human infant appears in John's Gospel. He introduces Jesus as the "Word," who was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-3).

He stands in the center of the eternal past with no background for the picture, while before Him the universe comes into being and life begins upon the earth and light shines into the hearts of men.

2. This eternal "Word" came into the world. He was made flesh. John says: "We beheld His glory" (John 1:14; I John 1:1).

In some way John, and others who had the intuition which is given by the Holy Spirit, saw in Christ the "Glory as of the Father."

This divine person was "full of grace and truth," but that was not the strange part of the manifestation. It is to be expected that God would be that way. The new thing that has transformed the world is the fact that whoever came into contact with Christ receives of this fulness, "Grace upon grace." Thus John begins his Gospel with Christ as the Son of God. Deity stands first, and in

John's Gospel the human qualities are rather secondary.

3. Jesus was so absolutely God in the mind of John that little human touches such as we have mentioned rather surprised John into noticing and remembering them.

To John it was a delight to recall the exact course of the great conversations in which Jesus turned the minds of His friends into the great highways of truth that led them into the land of unseen realities where they could behold, even though veiled in flesh, the light of God as it shone through Him.

4. John only chose to tell of a few miracles, but they were selected to reveal Jesus as the Son of God. In Christ we see God touching tenderly His world and the people who are in it.

5. The most intimate picture of Jesus that John carried in his heart was that of Christ as he remembered Him in the upper room. How strange that the other writers failed to get the true perspective of that scene. The others seemed to be so concerned about the supper and its value to the church that they did not get the deeper meaning into their narrative.

John caught the spirit of the last supper. He leaned upon His bosom. John was close to Jesus when He lifted up His eyes to heaven and talked to His Father. John remembered that prayer. John saw into the depths of His heart and the Spirit helped him so to write the record that we, too, may see Jesus as the Son of God.

6. John's recollections of the Christ of the Forty Days have already received special treatment. He knew the risen Christ as probably no one else really did. No doubt he was in the group that stood gazing steadfastly into heaven as Jesus ascended to take His place at the " right hand of the Father."

7. John's Gospel gives no account of the ascension of Jesus, because it was not the last time that John saw Jesus. He saw Him in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants was sent through John.

There are several pictures of Jesus in the Revelation. John saw Him several times in far more favorable environment than he had ever seen Him in the flesh upon the earth.

a. In the midst of " Seven golden candlesticks " (Rev. 1:13-16).

He was so beautiful that no language could describe His person.

b. At the close of this dispensation.

The scene is changed. This time John saw Jesus upon a throne. A rainbow surrounded the seat of deity. He was encircled in a covenant of blood-bought mercy (Rev. 4:2-4; Gen. 9:12).

John is invited to " Come hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter " (Rev. 4:1-3).

Every order of heavenly being had its official representative there, and they joined in saying: " Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come " (Rev. 4:8).

They all cast their crowns before His throne as they declared Him: "Worthy to receive glory and honor and power" (Rev. 4:11).

We might expect this to be the climax, but it is not.

c. At the end of the tribulation.

John saw Him again as He came back to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

d. At the close of the millennium.

Still again when the thousand years were finished John saw: "A great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away" (Rev. 20:11).

e. In the new heaven.

But a picture even brighter than the others is found in Revelation 21 and 22, where the new heavens entirely eclipse any former glory. There John says: "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face" (Rev. 22:3, 4).

This is John's message to the churches. It was sent by Jesus Himself. He signs His name: "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16).

There is also a postscript. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). And, while we wait: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:21).

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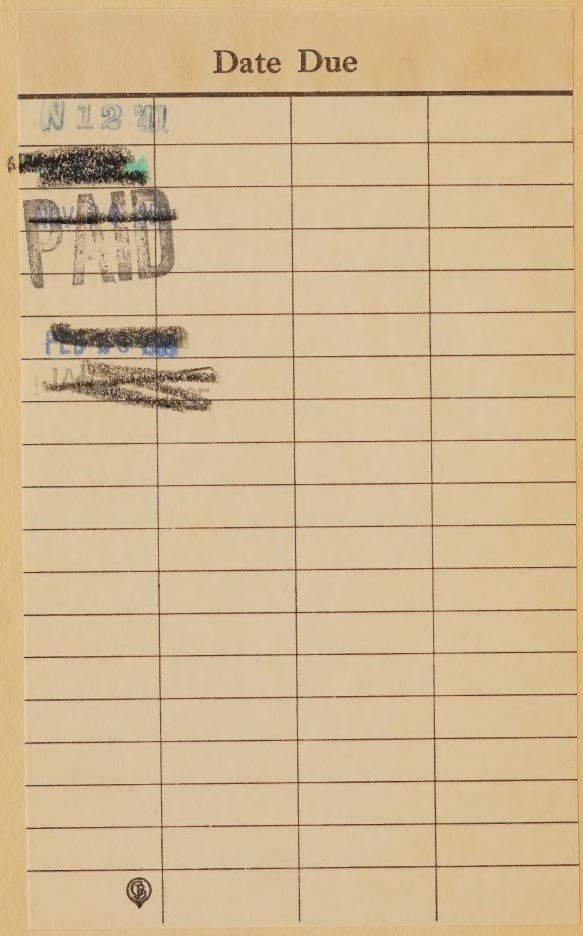
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